

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LISBON 04540 101316Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O R 101120Z AUG 75 ZFF4

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE NIACT 3727

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T LISBON 4540

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS INFO DIA WASHDC, USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER,
AND CINCLANT NORFOLK VA.

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PO

SUBJECT: MARIO SOARES AND SALGADO ZENHA ON CURRENT POLITICAL
SCENE

SUMMARY: SOARES AND SALGADO ZENHA SAY NEW GOVERNMENT CONTAINS
A NUMBER OF CRYPTO-COMMUNISTS. MELO ANTUNES'S MANIFESTO
RAPIDLY PICKING UP SIGNATURES WITHIN ARMED FORCES. OTELO
POSITION NOT CLEAR. SOARES AND SALGADO ZENHA URGE USG TO
REGARD VASCO GONCALVES AS THE ENEMY AND GIVE ITS FULL SUPPORT
DISCREETLY TO MELO ANTUNES GROUP. THEY SAY ANY MOVE NOW IN
AZORES OR BY SPINOLA WOULD HARM MELO ANTUNES'S EFFORTS. STATE
COMMUNISTS HAVE THEIR BACK TO THE WALL SINCE THEY TIED THEM-
SELVES SO CLOSELY TO VASCO GONCALVES. IN THE LONG RUN THEY
THINK VASCO GONCALVES AND PCP MUST LOSE TO MELO ANTUNES AND
PSP, WHICH TOGETHER REPRESENT LARGE MAJORITY OF POPULATION AND
ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 LISBON 04540 101316Z

1. I HAD DINNER ALONE AUGUST 9 WITH PSP LEADER SOARES AND

SALGADO ZENHA. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE SALGADO ZENHA IS REGARDED BY MANY AS THE REAL STRONG MAN OF THE PSP. SOARES AND SALGADO ZENHA HAVE BEEN WORKING EXTREMELY CLOSELY WITH MELO ANTUNES DURING CURRENT CRISIS. SOARES'S STRONG LETTER TO COSTA GOMES PROVIDES VISIBLE EVIDENCE OF THIS. SOARES WAS AWARE I WAS SEEKING TO MEET WITH MELO ANTUNES BUT DOUBTED IF MELO ANTUNES WOULD BE ABLE TO, SINCE HE MAY WELL BE FEARING ARREST FOLLOWING HIS SUSPENSION FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO AVOID IMPRESSION THAT MELO ANTUNES IS CLOSELY LINKED TO AMERICANS.

2. SOARES SAID MELO ANTUNES' DOCUMENT IS RAPIDLY GATHERING SIGNATURES WITHIN MILITARY (THIS IS OUR IMPRESSION ALSO). COLONEL JAIME NEVES, THE COMMANDO LEADER AND A KEY FIGURE, HAS NOW SIGNED. ROSA COUTINHO AND HIS GROUP WILL DEFINITELY NOT SIGN. OTELO'S POSITION IS UNCLEAR. HE HAS NOT SIGNED AND PROBABLY WILL NOT, BUT HE HAND-CARRIED THE DOCUMENT TO OPORTO. OTELO'S STAFF IS ANTI-COMMUNIST. SUSPENSION OF MELO ANTUNES AND HIS GROUP FROM REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL IS VIEWED BY SOARES AND SALGADO ZENHA AS AN EFFORT TO STOP MILITARY FROM SIGNING DOCUMENT. I DOUBTED IT WOULD WORK AND SOARES AGREED.

3. SOARES SAID THAT CLAIMS BY PRESIDENT AND OTHERS THAT NEW GOVERNMENT IS NON-PARTISAN ARE NONSENSE. VICE PRIME MINISTER METELO, THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS, THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR WHILE NOT FORMALLY COMMUNISTS ALL HAVE LINKS WITH PCP. MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS RUIVO IS PERHAPS THE WORST OF THE GROUP SINCE HIS LINKS ARE DIRECTLY WITH THE SOVIETS. THIS STEMS FROM THE DAYS WHEN HE WORKED FOR THE FAO. MOST IMPORTANT HOWEVER WAS THE FACT THAT VASCO GONCALVES CONTROLLED THE GOVERNMENT MACHINERY WITH AN IRON HAND. THEY CONSIDER HIM A COMMUNIST, BUT EVEN IF HE ISN'T, HIS STAFF IS RIDDLED WITH COMMUNISTS. COMMENT: SOARES HAS A TENDENCY TO

EXAGGERATE WHEN TALKING TO WESTERNERS ON THIS SUBJECT, BUT WHAT HE SAYS ABOUT GONCALVES'S STAFF AND HIS METHOD OF OPERATING IS CERTAINLY TRUE, AND OUR INFORMATION ON RUIVO IS ALL BAD.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 LISBON 04540 101316Z

4. THEY SAID THEY HAD SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT COSTA GOMES, BUT IMPLIED THEY HADN'T ENTIRELY WRITTEN HIM OFF. ALTHOUGH HE GAVE MODERATE SPEECHES HE HAD SAVED VASCO GONCALVES THREE TIMES. THEY BELIEVE THERE IS A POSSIBILITY HE IS BEING BLACKMAILED BY THE PCP. SAID US SHOULD CONTINUE TO WORK ON COSTA GOMES. I TOLD THEM I HAD JUST MADE A STRONG APPROACH TO HIM THAT VERY MORNING.

5. ACCORDING TO SOARES AND SALGADO ZENHA ANY MOVE IN THE AZORES WOULD DAMAGE MELO ANTUNES'S EFFORTS. THEY KNEW FOR A FACT THAT A GROUP OF COMMUNIST MILITARY OFFICERS (PROBABLY 5TH DIVISION) HAD ALREADY DECIDED THAT IF THE AZORES DECLARED INDEPENDENCE THE MILITARY WOULD TAKE NO ACTION. INSTEAD THEY WOULD USE IT AS A PROPAGANDA INSTRUMENT ON THE MAINLAND. IN EFFECT IT WOULD BECOME ANOTHER MARCH 11 TYPE OF EVENT IN WHICH THE COMMUNISTS COULD INSTIGATE ANOTHER LURCH TO THE LEFT AND SUBSTITUTE COMMUNISTS FOR MODERATES IN KEY POSITIONS. THE SAME WOULD APPLY TO ANY MOVE BY SPINOLA, WHO IS TOTALLY DISCREDITED HERE.

6. I TOLD SOARES WE HAD BEEN APPROACHED FROM TIME TO TIME BY VIOLENCE-PRONE GROUPS CLAIMING TO BE SOCIALISTS WHO WERE REQUESTING ARMS. I HAD REJECTED SUCH REQUESTS. SOARES SAID THESE GROUPS DID NOT REPRESENT THE SOCIALIST PARTY. HE KNEW OF THEIR EXISTENCE BUT DISAVOWED THEIR TACTICS.

7. BOTH SOARES AND SALGADO ZENHA THOUGHT THE PCP HAD "ITS BACK TO THE WALL." COMMUNISTS HAD TIED THEIR FORTUNES TOO CLOSELY TO ONE FACTION OF THE AFM AND THE AFM HAD NOW SPLIT APART IRRETRIEVABLY. THE PCP-SUPPORTED FACTION WAS VERY UNPOPULAR AS WAS VASCO GONCALVES, WITH WHOM THE PCP HAD BECOME OVERLY ASSOCIATED. THE MDP WAS IN THE PROCESS OF DISINTEGRATION. THEY WERE CONFIDENT THAT VASCO GONCALVES AND THE PCP WOULD LOSE IN THE LONG RUN.

8. BOTH SOARES AND SALGADO ZENHA STRESSED AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT THE US MUST SUPPORT THE MELO ANTUNES GROUP. THIS GROUP REPRESENTS THE LEGITIMATE REVOLUTIONARIES. PEOPLE LIKE MELO ANTUNES, VITOR ALVES AND VITOR CRESPO HAVE IMPECCABLE REVOLUTIONARY CREDENTIALS. VITOR LOURENCO HAD BEEN THE "MOTOR"

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 LISBON 04540 101316Z

OF THE REVOLUTION. COSTA BRAZ, FORMER MINISTER OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION, IS ALSO A VERY STRONG MAN. THE PSP INTENDS TO GIVE THEM FULL SUPPORT. SOARES AND SALGADO ZENHA ESTIMATE THAT WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME THEY AND MELO ANTUNES CAN RALLY 80 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION BEHIND THEM.

9. BOTH SOARES AND SALGADO ZENHA SAID AMERICAN SUPPORT MUST BE VERY DISCREET. THE LAST THING MELO ANTUNES COULD AFFORD IS TO BE VIEWED AS A STOOGE OF THE AMERICANS. THEY CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT THIS WEEK WOULD PROBABLY BE CRITICAL IN DECIDING WHICH WAY PORTUGAL WILL GO.

10. COMMENT: AS DEPARTMENT AWARE SOARES IS GENERALLY TEMPERMENTAL. ONE DAY HE WILL BE OPTIMISTIC AND THE NEXT DAY THE WORLD WILL BE COMING TO AN END. SALGADO ZENHA IS MUCH

MORE CONSISTENT. BOTH APPEARED TO BE VERY MUCH ON THE UP BEAT.
THEY WORRIED SOME ABOUT A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER BUT AGREED THAT
THE COMMUNISTS REALLY LACKED THE CAPACITY FOR AN OVERT COUP D'ETAT.
THEY OBVIOUSLY HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF FAITH IN MELO ANTUNES.
THEY THINK THAT HIS GROUP'S SUPPORT WITHIN THE MILITARY COM-
BINED WITH THE SOCIALISTS POPULAR BASE WILL PROVE SUFFICIENT
TO FORCE VASCO GONCALVES OUT EVEN IF MELO ANTUNES AND THE PSP
HAVE TO GO UNDERGROUND OR FACE ARREST IN THE SHORT TERM.
CARLUCCI

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DOCUMENTS, GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, ANTICOMMUNIST, POLITICAL SITUATION, COMMUNISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LISBON04540
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X4
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750276-0278
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750865/aaaacfgu.tel
Line Count: 179
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <03 OCT 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MARIO SOARES AND SALGADO ZENHA ON CURRENT POLITICAL SCENE
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PO, AFM, (SOARES, MARIO), (ZENHA, SALGADO), (ANTUNES, MELO), (NEVES, JAIME)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006